IDAHO
COMMUNITY TREES

News You Can Use

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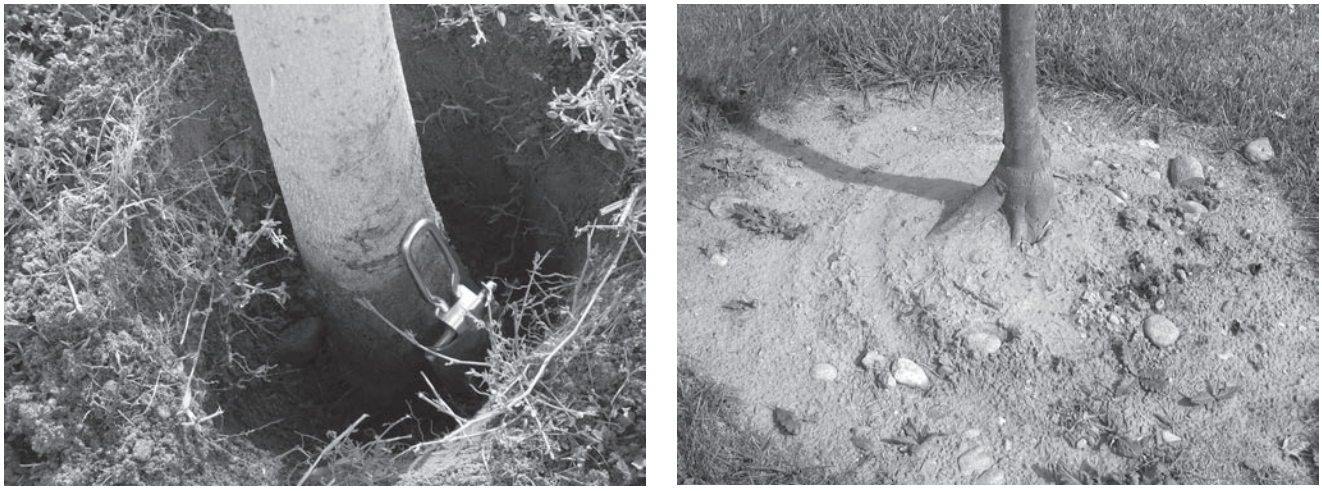
A NEWS BULLETIN FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO, THE IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF LANDS—COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM AND THE IDAHO COMMUNITY FORESTRY ADVISORY COUNCIL

What is the big – and costly – deal about planting too deeply? Please read Dave's article below.

Coordinator's Column

Tree Planting – the Good and the Bad It's About the Roots!



David Stephenson

(Left) Too many trees are being planted improperly by being planted too deeply. (Right) A good example of proper planting depth.

I just returned from the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture (PNW-ISA) conference in Boise. Hats off to conference co-chairs Gene Gray and Elroy Huff and the conference planning team for putting on an outstanding educational program. Congratulations to PNW-ISA Award recipients Gerry and Ann Bates (Arboriculture Award), Debbie Cook (Education Award) and the City of Boise Forestry Department (President's Award) for the great work they've done in promoting community forestry and arboriculture in Idaho.

While in southwest Idaho I reviewed some of the planting projects that have been installed over the past four years with grant money, something I do in different parts of the state each year. I enjoy visiting projects and seeing the tremendous positive impact they make in our communities. I recognize the hard work and efforts by staff and volunteers that make these great projects happen.

But of even greater importance than the above ground part of the planting is that which lies below the surface, so the next part of my inspection gets me down and dirty. This is when I become concerned that the lifespan of the tree may not match the intention of the planter or project planners. The biggest and almost universal problem I see is planting depth. The photos on this page tell it better than I can describe. I should be seeing first order roots at or slightly above grade, as in the right hand photo. This is what we see in the forest. As in nature, the tree's roots will grow down and out. Since the trunk and roots are at different heights, they won't come in contact with each other as they grow larger.

The photo on the left is, unfortunately, what I most often see. If I can't see the roots, I dig down around a number of trees to determine planting depth. In the photo to the left, I dug down nine inches around the trunk and still could not find the roots. Even a few inches too deep can be detrimental to the tree. The trees in this planting were already showing signs of decline, though most don't…yet. It can often be years or even decades before problems with planting too deeply begin to reveal themselves, and the tree declines and ultimately dies well before it reaches its mature size and greatest value.

Why is planting depth so critical? First, the zone where

continued on page 2

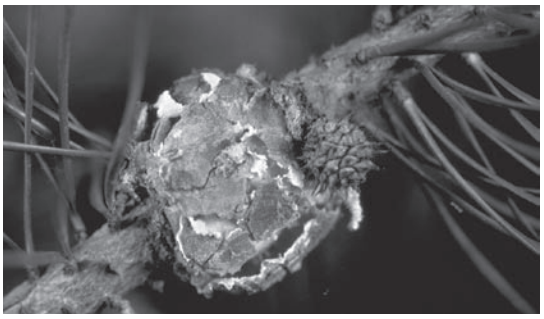
Gall Rusts – One Easy to Fix, One Can be Dangerous

Western Gall Rust is a native fungus that you might spot in your ponderosa, lodgepole, Scots, Mugo, Austrian, or other 2-3 needle pines. The disease can infect trees of any age and the easy one to fix will appear as a hard, round to pear-shaped gall on a branch. Orange spores are produced in cracks in the galls in spring and early summer. The spores are spread by wind and infect the succulent tissues of other susceptible pines under cool, moist conditions.

These galls may girdle the branch resulting in dieback, but do not generally result in serious growth loss. The fungus becomes inactive with the death of the branch, but the woody swellings remain on the tree. The best method of controlling these galls is to simply prune off the branch with the gall and burn or dispose of it. Directing irrigation sprinklers away from the tree is also a good idea.

Galls that develop on the main stem can cause the formation of concentric ridges in the sapwood called "hip" cankers. Hip cankers on large trees rarely kill the tree but frequently contribute to the trunk breaking at that point. A tree with this kind of gall in a park, yard or other public place represents a hazard and should probably be removed.

Source: Holly Kearns, USDA Forest Service pathologist, Coeur d'Alene. For more information visit: *http://plant-disease.ippc.orst.edu/disease.cfm?RecordID=858*
http://cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/factsheets/western-gall-rust



James W. Byler, USDA Forest Service

Susan K. Hagle, USDA Forest Service

Above: Western gall rust with orange spores on a branch in spring.

Left: A stem or "hip" canker presents a dangerous situation.

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Coordinator's Column continued from page 1

the trunk becomes roots (zone of rapid taper) needs to have air circulating around it. Burying this area with soil or mulch can lead to a host of problems, including stem decay. But perhaps even more critical is that the roots, which need oxygen found in the upper areas of soil, will now grow UP and out. This means that roots and trunk are at the same level in the soil (see diagram on page 4). Lateral roots and the trunk can and often do meet at some point in the future as each grows larger, resulting in stem-girdling roots. This constricts the flow of moisture and nutrients in the trunk and causes a weak point at the very base of the tree, making it prone to failure.

There is no more important time in the life of a tree than at planting. I know when each of us plants a tree, we want and expect it to live long and grow to its mature size. How we plant can make the difference between a tree that lives a few years or many decades. The projects I looked at this year really look great…above ground. But in order for them to continue to look great decades from now, we *must* change our planting practices. Don't expect volunteers or the person you hire to necessarily plant them correctly. We all need to insist that trees are planted according to the industry and professional standards—ANSI A300 part six (Transplanting) and ANSI Z60.1 (Nursery Stock). Become familiar with these. Inspect the trees above *and* below ground after planting to ensure these standards were followed. If not, and if contracted, require corrective action before making final payment. Our investments of time and money are too great to not plant trees so they live long and thrive, adding ongoing value to our cities.

– David Stephenson,
Community Forestry Coordinator

Partnerships For Progress

Editor's Note: *What community could not use more help with doing the things necessary to bring good management to its street and park trees? Here are some good suggestions from Rachael Geotzelman of the Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute and Mike Bowman of the Idaho Community Forestry Advisory Council and a member of the Moscow Tree Commission.*

A partnership with AmeriCorps provides quality personnel that can help establish a scientifically based community forestry program in your community.

AmeriCorps is a national service agency that engages more than 70,000 Americans in volunteer projects each year. AmeriCorps members serve through more than 3,000 nonprofits, public agencies, faith-based and other community organizations, helping to meet critical needs in education, public safety, health and the environment. The variety of service opportunities is almost unlimited.

Throughout Idaho and eastern Washington, AmeriCorps-PCEI (Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute), along with Education Service District 112 and ServeIdaho (the governor's commission on volunteering and community service), help address critical environmental needs in our communities. Last summer, the Cities of Moscow and Eagle sponsored AmeriCorps-PCEI members to serve on projects such as tree inventories, community education, and researching carbon credits.

Moscow City Forester Roger Blanchard said "The AmeriCorps volunteers brought expertise and accomplishments to the city's forestry program beyond budget capabilities."

By sponsoring an AmeriCorps member, agencies not only increase their capacity but also provide members professional development opportunities. In addition, AmeriCorps members earn money for school or student loans and, in some AmeriCorps programs, can also receive a small living allowance and benefits at no or minimal cost to the sponsoring agency.

For more information about AmeriCorps-PCEI, please visit *www.pcei.org/pcc* or phone 208.882.1444.

Calendar

November 18 - 20, 2008

Partners in Community Forestry National Conference, Atlanta, GA. (Contact Arbor Day Foundation at *www.arboryday.org* or (402) 474-5655.)

November 3-7, 2008

Arborist School, Utah Dept. of Natural Resources, Salt Lake City. (Contact Utah Chapter-ISA at (801) 446-8229 or *Lisa_UCFC@yahoo.com.*)

November/December, 2008

Inland Northwest Green Industry Series (3 sessions), Spokane, Washington. (Contact Pacific Northwest Chapter, International Society of Arboriculture (PNW-ISA) at (503) 874-8263.)

December 1, 2008

Deadline for submission of Tree City USA Applications.

Jan 21–23, 2009

Idaho Horticulture Expo, Boise Centre on the Grove, Boise. (Contact Ann Bates, 800/INA-GROW or *www.inlagrow.org/expo2007.htm.)*

Jan 22-23, 2009

Inland Northwest Turf, **Tree & Landscape Conference**, Coeur d'Alene Resort, CDA. (Contact WSU Conference Office at 800/942-4978 or *http://capps.wsu.edu/ttlc/.)*

Upcoming Certified Arborist (CA), Municipal Arborist (MA), Utility Arborist (UA), and Certified Tree Worker (CTW) written Exams

January 24, 2009 Boise – afternoon exam (CA, MA, UA, CTW)

For information or to register, contact: Pacific Northwest Chapter, International Society of Arboriculture at 503/874-8263 or 217-355-9411 or email: *info@pnwisa.org.*

Begin Planning Now for Arbor Day 2009

Each year, the last Friday in April marks Arbor Day – that special holiday set aside to appreciate the wonders of trees. This year, the Idaho Forest Products Commission will team up with Idaho businesses, community foresters and others in a *statewide Arbor Day celebration.* Highlights of the project include a billboard campaign, public service radio announcements, special Arbor Day t-shirts, brochures and posters, an Arbor Day celebration at the Capitol and, of course, seedlings for community Arbor Day celebrations.

Idaho Forest Products Commission urges Idaho communities to start planning now to celebrate Arbor Day and Idaho forests. April 24 will be here before you know it! More details will be available in early 2009 at *www.idahoforests.org* or contact Betty Munis at 208/334-3292.

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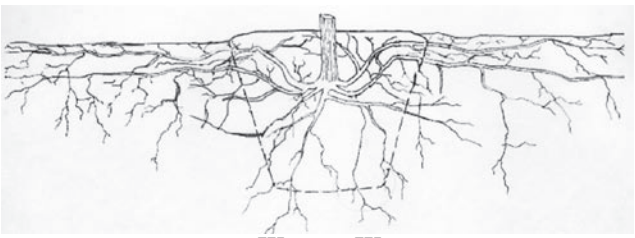
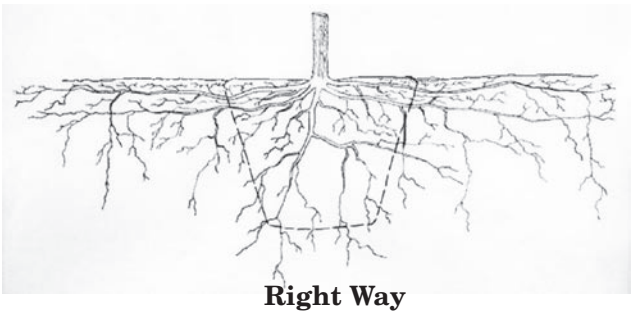
Tree tip



Wrong Way



Right Way

Checklist for Planting at Proper Depth

- ☑ When tree arrives, determine location of root flare (upper most, lateral, or first order roots). They may be covered with nursery soil or packing material.
- ☑ Make sure the planting hole has a firm bottom and that it is no deeper than the distance from the bottom of the soil ball to the first order roots so that the root flare is at or slightly above the ground level. (A firm bottom prevents settling that would make the tree too deep.)
- ☑ After placement in the hole, remove the container or wrapping material and any soil covering the first order roots. Make certain roots are not circling. If they are, force them into a radial position.
- ☑ Fill the hole with the same soil that was removed and water (don't tamp).